

Getting Started

Step 1 - Getting Started, Making Your List

The first step is recognizing that you, or your family member, have a unique combination of care needs and comfort preferences. The objective is to find the home that can best respond to these. A good place to start is by making a list of your individual needs and preferences. Some of these will have a higher priority for you than others and you need to identify these as part of the process. The following questions can assist you in building your list.

Care Philosophy

- ◆ What is important to me about the way a home provides care?
- ◆ How important is it that I actively participate in care planning?
- ◆ What do I need to be reassured if I am unable to actively participate in care planning?
- ◆ How would I like to be kept informed?
- ◆ How important is choice to me (e.g. will the home let me try and walk or restrict me because I might fall off?)

Direct Care

- ◆ What specific care and support do I need?
- ◆ What types of staff are required to deliver this care and support?

Daily Living

- ◆ What types of foods do I like or dislike?
- ◆ What types of activities interest me?
- ◆ Do I like to participate in small groups, large groups?
- ◆ How important is it for me to have a choice in what I do?

Special Needs

- ◆ What cultural supports are important to me?
- ◆ What spiritual supports are important to me?

Physical Surroundings & Atmosphere

- ◆ What types of things make me comfortable and feel at home?

Confidence and Peace of Mind

- ◆ What would make me worry less about my care and safety?

Remember

Often there is a high degree of anxiety and guilt for you and your family members over both the physical and emotional separation that is about to take place. Now is the time to consider how you can best address this. This might involve considerations like the location of the home and how it can be accessed by others. You should consider other supports that a home might have in place like access to email, family activities and events, etc.

Step 2 – Contacting Prospective Homes

When you have your list, you are ready to begin contacting homes to see how they match up. We strongly recommend that you do this by contacting the home and arranging for a tour. The personal visit will give you a personal ‘feel’ for the home that will add to the information and data that you collect.

Step 3 – Compiling and Comparing Information

The checklist provides a set of suggested questions that you can ask as well as room for you to record the answers and your comments. Space is also provided for you to add your own questions on items that are specific to your personal situation, e.g. specific medical conditions. The resource section at the end of the document may assist you in understanding what specific supports you should be looking for with respect to medical conditions such as Alzheimer’s, stroke, etc.

You can use a separate copy of the checklist for each home on your list. Once you have completed collecting your information, you can then compare the results to help you determine the best fit for you and your individual circumstances.